

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE FLASH

S E C R E T STATE 099693

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. BREZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 12924 ACTION SECSTATE 03 MAY 77

QUOTE

S E C R E T PARIS 12924

NODIS

FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE
DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O.11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR US VN

SUBJ: US/VN RELATIONS: FIRST MEETING WITH VIETNAMESE

1. MEETING LASTED THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, AT
VIETNAMESE EMBASSY. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS AND OUR
INITIAL COMMENTS ON MEETING. FULL REPORT WILL FOLLOW.

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2. AS PREVIOUSLY AGREED, HOLBROOKE OPENED WITH
PREPARED REMARKS WHICH CONVEYED OUR PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH
RELATIONS AND EXCHANGE EMBASSIES. PHAN HIEN THEN ASKED
SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT FOCUSED ON OUR SINCERITY IN
WANTING NORMAL RELATIONS AND WHETHER OR NOT WE WOULD
PROVIDE AID. HE ALSO ASKED WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD

IN MIND IN REGARD TO JOINT EXPLOITATION OF OIL RESOURCES
IN AREA.

3. IN RESPONSE, HOLBROOKE ASSURED VIETNAMESE ON
PRESIDENT'S SINCERITY RE NORMAL RELATIONS AND CITED
CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER PROHIBITIONS ON AID. HE
STRESSED PRESENT STATE OF US PUBLIC OPINION ON ISSUE
AND FACT THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS THAT THE
PRESIDENT COULD NOT DO IN ANY CASE WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL
APPROVAL. AT THIS POINT HE ALSO TOLD HIEN THAT WE WOULD
NO LONGER OBJECT TO UN MEMBERSHIP FOR SRV, AND THAT
TRADE EMBARGO WOULD BE LIFTED WHEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
WERE ESTABLISHED AND EMBASSIES SET UP IN BOTH CAPITALS.

4. DURING TEA BREAK WHICH FOLLOWED, HIEN SAID THAT
"WE MUST FIND IMAGINATIVE WAYS TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF
AID." HIEN SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD MAKE SECRET
AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING ON AID AS PART OF OVERALL
PACKAGE DEAL WHICH INCLUDED UN MEMBERSHIP, TRADE
EMBARGO, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, AND MIA'S. HOLBROOKE
REPLIED THAT "SECRET DEALS" ARE OUT OF THE QUESTION AND
THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS CONGRESSIONAL
INVOLVEMENT NOT ONLY UNAVOIDABLE BUT DESIREABLE.

5. HIEN RETURNED TO THIS THEME AFTER TEA BREAK. HE
ALSO NOTED THAT UN ISSUE WAS NOW RESOLVED, BUT ASKED
WHY WE WERE WITHHOLDING LIFTING OF TRADE EMBARGO UNTIL
AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT
TRADE EMBARGO BE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID THAT
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SINCE WOODCOCK COMMISSION HAD VISITED HANOI, SRV HAD
MADE ADDITIONAL EFFORTS TO MEET US CONCERNS ON MIA
ISSUE, AND THAT THE SRV WOULD NOW INCREASE THEIR EFFORTS
FURTHER. (IN TEA BREAK CONVERSATIONS, FRANK SIEVERTS
CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS ON THIS MATTER, WHICH WILL BE
SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE TELEGRAM.) HIEN SAID THAT SRV
COULD DO EVEN MORE, BUT THIS WAS RELATED TO OUR EFFORTS
ON AID. HE SAID HIS COUNTRY WANTED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS,
BUT THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE AMERICAN
FLAG TO FLY IN HANOI OVER AN EMBASSY UNTIL WE HAD GIVEN
SOME AID TO VIETNAM. HE DID NOT AT THIS SESSION REFER
TO AN AID OBLIGATION OR TO REPARATIONS OR TO THE PARIS
ACCORDS, OR TO ANY SPECIFIC AMOUNTS BUT HE REPEATEDLY
RETURNED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE TO HIS COUNTRY.
HOLBROOKE STRESSED AGAIN THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WISHED
TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND US AND MOVE FORWARD, AND THAT
THIS COULD BEST BE DONE BY A FEW SIMPLE STEPS THAT COULD
BE TAKEN NOW.

6. HIEN NEVER DIRECTLY ACCEPTED OR REJECTED ANY OF OUR PROPOSALS. HE SUGGESTED MEETING TOMORROW FOR HIS MORE CONSIDERED STATEMENT (HE CHARACTERIZED HIS COMMENTS TODAY AS "PRELIMINARY"). IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL HAVE NEW INSTRUCTIONS BY TOMORROW, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IF HE DOES NOT, THEN WE PROPOSE TO PROCEED AS FOLLOWS ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT ISSUES:

A. TRADE EMBARGO. WE SEE NO NEED TO INDICATE WE WILL LIFT THE EMBARGO IMMEDIATELY. OUR PRESENT POSITION GIVES US SOME LEVERAGE AND IS A REASONABLE ONE. TRADE AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SHOULD GO TOGETHER.

B. AID. ON QUESTION OF AID, WE SAID TODAY THAT WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THEIR DESIRE FOR RECONSTRUCTION AID AND THEIR VIEW OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING IT, A
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LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICANS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS DO NOT SHARE THIS VIEW WHICH IS BASED ON PAST HISTORY. THEIR VIEW IS, RATHER, REFLECTED CLEARLY IN CURRENT LEGISLATIVE PROHIBITIONS ON AID, AND THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION IS ALSO CLEAR. HOLBROOKE ADDED, "PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO LOOK TO FUTURE RE RELATIONSHIPS WITH VIETNAM, INCLUDING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS, AND WE BELIEVE FOCUSING ON MUTUAL EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION WILL BE BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH SIDES." WE NOTED PRIVATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS US CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AIDING VIETNAM. WE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS INSTRUCTED USG TO INTERPOSE NO FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO SUCH MULTI-LATERAL AID. WE NOTED THAT "AS RELATIONS DEVELOP, THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHANGING ATTITUDES WILL LEAD TO CHANGES IN PRESENT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RESTRICTIONS SO AS TO PERMIT MODEST AMOUNTS OF OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE, IN KEEPING WITH US HUMANITARIAN TRADITIONS." IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HIEN IS ASKING FOR SOME SORT OF COMMITMENT (IN PRIVATE IF THAT IS THE BEST HE CAN GET) THAT WE WOULD GO TO CONGRESS FOR SOME AS YET UNDEFINED AMOUNT OF AID. UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED, WE WILL SIMPLY REPEAT TOMORROW, IN AS FORCEFUL A WAY AS POSSIBLE, WHAT WE SAID TODAY.

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THIS IS A TRICKY TACTICAL QUESTION. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HIEN WILL ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL TOMORROW, BUT HE WILL CERTAINLY NOT REJECT IT. IF HE DOES NOT AGREE, WE PROPOSE THAT WE LEAVE OUR OFFER ON THE TABLE, AND

INDICATE THAT WE ARE READY TO RETURN TO PARIS WHENEVER
HIS GOVERNMENT WISHES TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS LEADING TO
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. IF HE
OFFERS TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITHOUT AGREEING ON
EMBASSIES, WE WILL INDICATE THAT IT HAS BEEN CONSISTENT
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US PRACTICE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS INCLUDES
EARLY EXCHANGE OF EMBASSIES.

D. PUBLIC STATEMENTS. WE RECOMMEND THAT WE
EXPLAIN TO THE VIETNAMESE THAT WE MUST MAKE PUBLIC THE
GENERAL NATURE OF OUR POSITION, WHILE AVOIDING DETAILS.
WE SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC FACT THAT WE HAVE REMOVED US
VETO OF SRV MEMBERSHIP IN UN. WE MUST BE PREPARED
IF WE FOLLOW THIS COURSE TO STATE PUBLICLY THAT WE ARE
SATISFIED THAT PROCEDURES NOW IN TRAIN WILL LEAD TO
RESOLUTION OF MIA QUESTION. IN REGARD TO ALL OF
FOREGOING, WE URGE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CONGRESSIONAL
CONSULTATIONAM

9. WE AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS AS APPROPRIATE ON
ABOVE.
GAMMON.
UNQUOTE VANCE.

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